GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2169
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2007
SALT TREATY
Kaushal Shri Raghuvir Singh

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the United States of America has announced the schemes of the National Missile Defence (NMD) and the Target Missile Defence (TMD) in violation of the SALT treaty signed by various countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether an intense arms race has begun as a result thereof;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a)-(b) On 13 December 2001, the United States gave official notice to the Russian Federation of its intention to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, signed at the end of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) in 1972. The ABM Treaty terminated as of June 2002 and on December 16, 2002, the US President issued a directive announcing deployment of ballistic missile defence capabilities from 2004 and eliminating the distinction between 'national' and 'theatre' missile defence. So far only space-based sensors are part of the US Ballistic Missile Defence System (BMDS).

(c)-(d) Deployment of weapons in outer space or of anti-satellite weapons may threaten the longstanding international consensus on peaceful uses of outer space. Government support efforts to strengthen the existing international legal regime on peaceful uses of outer space, including through the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in the Conference on Disarmament.

(e) Government will continue to be closely engaged with the multilateral effort towards keeping outer space free of weapons.